The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13.

UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.

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For the Myrtle.

The Bird Preacher.

WHO comes in the winter with sermon and hymn
And takes for his pulpit a cherry tree limb,
With the text, so encouraging, "Be of good cheer,"
Though the blossoms are gone, and the weather is drear,
Though snow-flakes have covered his porch on the tree,
'Tis the brave little preacher, the chick-a-D.D.

In the fair summer mornings we thought not of him,
When flowers and leaves clothe the cherry-tree limb,
But now, when the garden is stricken with frost,
And summer's sweet melodies silent and lost,
We prize the lone singer that stays with us here
To preach his short sermon of trust and good cheer.

We may listen with pleasure to eloquent speech,
And to many wise precepts the doctors may teach,
But for precept and practice in darkest of days,
For the best of advice in the brightest of ways,
From his wind-shaken stand in the old cherry tree,
Surely none can do better than chick-a-D.D. *L.*

The Present.

THINK not of the past or future,
The present is all thou hast;
Future will soon be present;
Present will soon be the past.

Regret can never avail thee;
Longing will only waste;
Cheerful work in the present
Will bring thy wishes with haste.

This is life's only secret;
Love and work and believe.
The worker soon ceases regretting;
The loving soon cease to grieve.

Congregationalist.

Beyond the fall of dews,
Deeper than plummet lies,
Float ships, with all their crews,
No more to sink or rise.

For the Myrtle.

Robby's Dream.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.

I.

"ROBBY! here is a rabbit. Run, run, and we can catch him."

"Which way did he go?" said Robby, all excitement at the thought of catching a rabbit.

"He went over the brow of the hill."

"Oh yes, yonder he goes. I see him through the trees. Run, run, Willie, or he will escape us."

Thus the two boys excited one another to action.

They were boys who had been brought up in the town, and were spending one of their summer vacations at their uncle's farm in the country.

Everything on the farm interested them. They never grew weary searching the meadows and woods, and every day brought them some new pleasure or surprise.

They were particularly fond of the wild game in the woods, and spent a great many hours hunting.

It was on one of these hunting expeditions that we find them on the morning of which I write.

Over the brow of the hill, down through the bushes and trees they ran, Willie catching his foot on a large rock and going head over heels into the bushes, but picking himself up, without waiting to see whether he was hurt, and running on again.

"Hurry, hurry, or we shall lose him."

"Now he is gone."

"Oh no! Yonder I see him."

"If we don't run faster we shall lose him."

"He is certainly lost now."

"No, I see him."

"There he goes into a hole on the hillside."

These were the exclamations of the boys as they chased the rabbit over the steep hillside.

Running up to the place where they had seen him vanish, they found that he had a hole there, just large enough to take in his body, and to this he had fled, and safely housed himself.

"Oh, how provoking," said Willie, "that he should get away from us so. I thought we were sure of him."

"Let me come. I'll run my hand into the hole, and see if I can't touch him."

Lying down flat on the ground, he run his hand into the hole. But when the length of his arm had gone in, he seemed no nearer touching the rabbit than when he began.

"He's a cunning fellow, at least he thought he was cunning to dig so deep into the hillside, but I'll fix him."

Robby sprang up, as he said this, and rolled a big stone over the mouth of the hole.

"Oh Robby, don't do that."

"Why not?" said Robby.

"Because it is cruel, and it does no one any good. We can't get the rabbit by doing that, and we only kill him to no purpose."

"I don't care," said Robby. "I am vexed with him for running into that hole and I'll let him know it."

"I know it isn't right to do so," said Willie.

"Well, right or wrong, I am going to do so. Now you needn't say any more about it."

Willie knew that farther words were useless, for Robby was very obstinate, and when he had determined on doing anything he was not easily turned from his purpose.

But Willie had a mind of his own as well as his brother. He resolved that he would liberate the rabbit, though he did not wish to have any quarrel about it.

The boys walked silently down the hill, toward the house.

Robby knew that he was doing a cruel bad action, and he was in no mood to talk. And Willie did not care to break the silence.

After they had eaten their dinner, Robby took a book, in which he was interested, and sat down to read. Willie thought this was a good chance to carry out his plans, and leaving the house without Robby's seeing him, he crept up the hillside and rolled away the stone from the mouth of the rabbit's hole.

"There, you poor little fellow, take your freedom. You deserve to live as much as any of us."

If the rabbit heard what was said, he made no answer, but I have no doubt he felt very thankful.

When Willie came back to the house, Robby was still reading, and of course knew nothing of what Willie had done.

He did not seem happy and quiet with his book, as he usually did when he sat down to read. When he saw Willie, he said,

"Let's go down to the river, and go in swimming."

"What, are you tired of your book so soon? You usually read half the afternoon when you get about it," said Willie.

"Well, I'm not going to read this afternoon, for I am restless, and I've had enough of this."

"Very well, we'll go to the river then."

Away the boys went, down through the meadows to the river. Willie was inclined to stop and see the birds, and the crickets, and grasshoppers, and all the living things that so interested the boys in the summer fields. But Robby didn't wish to stop for anything this afternoon.

"Come on, Willie," he said, "we shall never get to the river if you are going to stop a week over every bug that you see."

"I didn't know that I had stopped a week over any of them. What is the matter with you this afternoon? You are usually so pleased to see everything that we find out of doors."

"Well, I am in a hurry this afternoon. I have set out to go swimming, and I want to go."

"So do I want to go swimming," said Willie, "and I intend to go, but I don't think the river will run away from us, if we don't reach it in the next five minutes."

"No, I suppose not, and we are in no danger of reaching it in five minutes. We have loitered along so that we are not half way down to the river yet."

"How do you know? Did you ever measure the distance from the house to the river?"

"I've measured it with my feet many a time. Haven't I been down here nearly every day since we came to uncle's."

"Yes, I know we have been down often, but we do not know the exact distance after all."

"We ought to have sense enough to know some things, without making such a great fuss about our ways of getting the knowledge," said Robby.

"Yes, I suppose we had. But I doubt whether you can know very accurately without having the distance measured."

"I read about a blind man the other day, who could tell distances. He could tell the height of a building or a fence when he was approaching it."

"I guess that man could see some, couldn't he?"

"No, not one bit with his eyes. He could not distinguish between light and darkness."

"Then how could he tell the height of things?"

"He said he saw through the pores of his skin."

"How strange. Could he tell heights accurately?"

"Yes, very accurately, more so than most people can do who see with their eyes. The account of him that I saw, told of his saying to a gentleman with whom he was walking, 'I think this fence that we are passing is not as high as my shoulder.' 'It is higher,' said his companion. But on measuring they found that the blind man had judged most accurately. The fence was three inches lower than his shoulder."

"How singular," said Willie. "I wonder how he knew that he saw through his skin?"

"By covering his face. When a thick veil was over his face, he couldn't see at all, he couldn't see as well in a fog, but ordinary darkness made no difference to him."

"That seems very wonderful, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it is very wonderful."

"I know I couldn't see through my face."

"You could if your face was educated to perceiving. We don't know what we can do until we are tried. I have thought a great deal about it since I read about this blind man. It is to the spirit that is in us that the Lord gives understanding. It we only have the eyes of the spirit open, we can perceive everything with that eye, whatever the condition of our bodies may be. But here we are at the river. Let us have our bath now, and talk more about these wonderful perceptions afterward." *E. M. B.*

WHAT size is best for growing boys and girls? Exer-cise.

Song of Life.

A TRAVELLER through a dusty road, strewed acorns on the lea,
And one took root, and sprouted up, and grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at evening time, to breathe its early vows,
And age was pleased, in heats of noon, to bask beneath its boughs;
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs, the birds sweet music bore,
It stood a glory in its place, a blessing evermore!

A little spring had lost its way, amid the grass and fern,
A passing stranger scooped a well, where weary man might turn;
He walled it in, and hung with care a ladle at the brink—
He thought not of the deed he did, but jaded toil might drink.
He passed again—and lo! the well, by summers never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parched tongues and saved a life beside!

A dreamer dropped a random thought, 'twas old, and yet was new—
A simple fancy of the brain, but strong in being true;
It shone upon a genial mind, and lo! its light became
A lamp of life, a beacon ray, a monitory flame.
The thought was small—its issues great; a watch-fire on the hill,
It shed its radiance far adown, and cheers the valley still!

A nameless man, amid a crowd that thronged the daily mart,
Let fall a word of hope and love, unstudied, from the heart:
A whisper on the tumult thrown—a transitory breath—
It raised a brother from the dust, it saved a soul from death.
O germ! O fount! O word of love! O thought at random cast!
Ye were but little at the first, but mighty at the last!

Charles Mackay.

A Soft Answer.

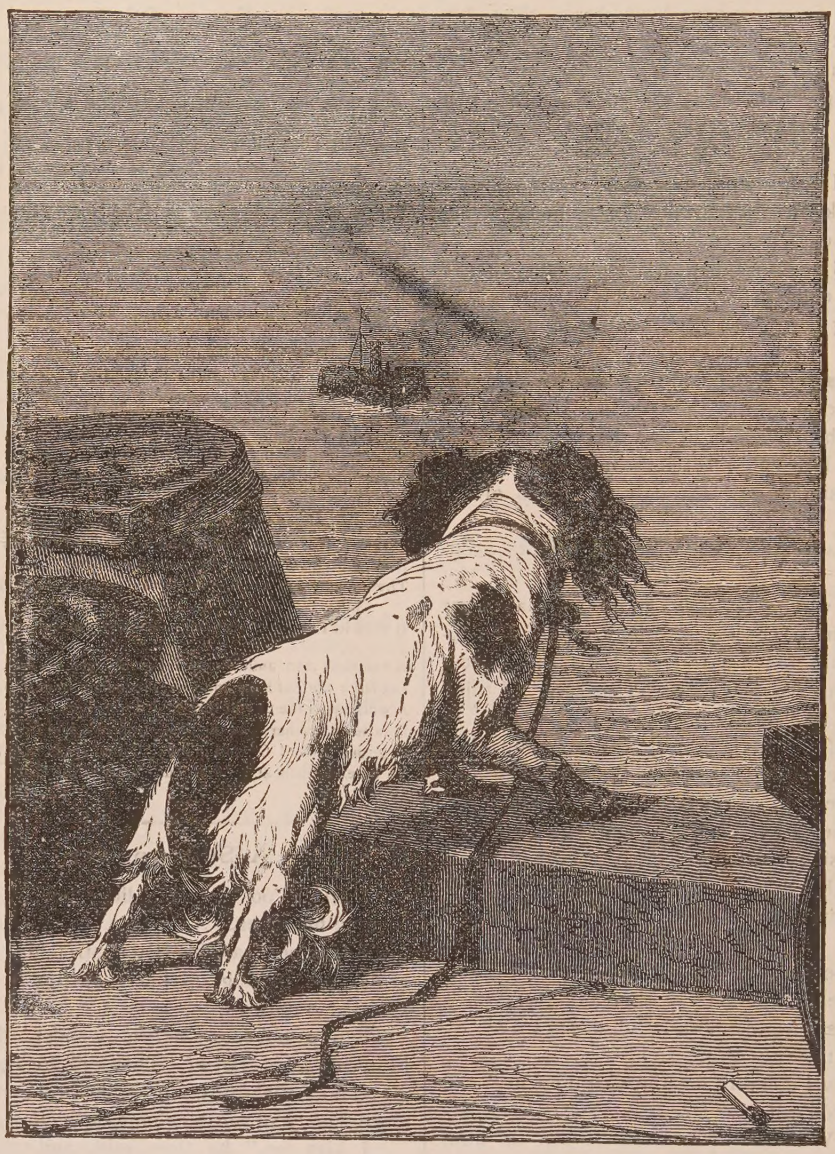
"I strike 'oo," cried a little boy, in a sharp tone, to his sister.

"I *kiss* 'oo," said his sister, stretching out her arms, and putting up her rosy lips in a sweet kiss.

Tommy looked at her in wonder. Did his little ears hear aright? They did, for there was a kiss on Susie's lips. A smile broke over his angry face, like sunshine on a dark cloud.

"I kiss 'oo," he then said, and the little brother and sister hugged and kissed each other quite heartily. A kiss for a blow is better than tit for tat, isn't it?

THERE is no outward sign of politeness which has not a deep moral reason. True education teaches both the sign and the reason. Behavior is a mirror in which every one shows his own image. There is a politeness of the heart akin to love, from which springs the easiest politeness of outward behavior.



For the Myrtle.

The Faithful Watcher.

THE Captain of the steamer which you see coming in the distance, is Ponto's master.

The steamer makes short trips, being gone a week from port to port. Ponto knows the days of the vessel's arrival as well as any one, and nothing can prevent his running down to the wharf to welcome it.

Would that all our human friends were as faithful and eager in their expressions of joy.

E. M. B.

CERTAINLY, work is not always required of a man. There is such a thing as sacred idleness, the cultivation of which is now fearfully neglected. — *Macdonald.*

For the Myrtle.

Sharing Pleasures.

"Oh grandma, I am so sorry that you cannot go with us on the excursion to-day," said Frank Damon, as he came on tiptoe into his grandmother's sick chamber.

"I am sorry, too, my boy," his grandmother replied. "It would have been a pleasure to me to spend the day in the open air, for I have been a long time shut up within these four walls. But it might not have been as good for me after all, as to be here, so I will not complain."

"I don't see how you can say so, grandmother. I am sure the sweet fields are a great deal nicer than this room, and the day is almost perfect. You could be very happy out in the sunshine. I know it would be better for you than this darkened room."

"You mean to say that you *think* it would be better."

"Why no, grandmother. I said just what I meant. I *know* the sunshine and open air is better than a close darkened room for any one."

"Do you not think that God knows better than either you or I, what is best for each one of his children?"

"Yes," Frank replied slowly, "I suppose that he knows everything. But it is very hard for me to see why he leaves good people like you to suffer for so very long a time without making them well."

"There are a great many things that it is hard for us to see. But that is no reason that they are not right, because we do not see them so. There would be no need for faith if we saw clearly every step of the way through the earth life."

"I snppose you are right, grandmother. Indeed you always are thinking so much better than I think about everything. But yet I cannot help wishing that you were to be with us to-day, for grandfather and I never half enjoy anything when we leave you at home."

"Thank you for the kind wish. I will go with you in spirit if I cannot in body," said Mrs. Damon, and she gave Frank his good-bye kiss as cheerfully as if it were she that was going out for a day of pleasure.

Frank ran away to join the merry party in the barge which was to convey them to the lovely picnic grove where they were to spend the day. Yet after he had started he ran back to say.

"I will bring as much of the picnic home with me for you, grandmother, as I can."

"Thank you, my dear," said Mrs. Damon, looking up from her pillow with a smile, "that will be almost as good as going."

Again Frank ran away, but this time he had his large sketch book under his arm, and he ran, thinking, I will make a sketch of the prettiest

place I can find to-day, and bring it to grandmother, and that will be some compensation to her for not going.

The boys of the party laughed at Frank all the way about having such a huge book for a companion, but he did not tell them what it was, or why he was carrying it.

Soon after they arrived at the grove, Frank was missing from the merry group. His absence was not at first noticed, for every one was busy with play or work.

The grown people built a fire and set about making the tea and coffee for the dinner, and setting the tables, that all the hungry party might eat. The children scattered about the grove, to amuse themselves with games until the dinner was ready, and every one was busily happy.

But Grandfather Damon soon found that Frank was neither with the workers nor the frolickers, and he went about hunting for him.

Where you see him in the picture, Grandfather Damon found him. He stole up softly behind him and saw that he was making a beautiful sketch.

"Ah, Frank, my boy, I have caught you this time," he said. "I thought we came out for a day of pleasure. Why don't you go and play and enjoy yourself as the other boys are doing?"

"Why grandfather, there is no enjoyment for me equal to this. I am trying to sketch this beautiful scene that I may carry a part of the joy of the day home to grandmother."

"Well done, my noble lad," said Grandfather Damon. "It is a boy worth having who gets his pleasure by giving pleasure to others."

Do we not all of us, dear children, agree with Grandfather Damon? *E. M. B.*

A Silver Egg; or, a Promise within a Promise.

A silver egg was once prepared as a present to a Saxon queen. Open the silver by a secret spring, and there was found a yolk of gold; find the spring of the gold, and it flew open, and disclosed a beautiful bird; press the wings of the bird, aud in its breast was found a crown, jewelled aud radiant; and even within the crown, upheld by a spring like the rest, was a ring of diamonds which fitted the finger of the princess herself.

Oh! how many a promise there is within a promise in the Scripture, the silver around the gold, and the gold around the jewels; yet how few of God's children ever find their way far enough among the springs to discover the crown of his rejoicing, or the ring of his covenant of peace!

If I Could Keep Her So.

Just a little baby, lying in my arms —
Would that I could keep you with your baby charms;
Helpless, clinging fingers, downy, golden hair,
Where the sunshine lingers, caught from otherwhere;
Blue eyes asking questions, lips that cannot speak,
Roly-poly shoulders, dimple on your cheek;
Dainty little blossom in a world of woe,
Thus I fain would keep you, for I love you so.

Roguish little damsel, scarcely six years old —
Feet that never weary, hair of deeper gold;
Restless, busy fingers all the time at play,
Tongue that never ceases talking all the day;
Blue eyes learning wonders of the world about,
Here you come to tell them — what an eager shout —
Winsome little damsel, all the neighbors know;
Thus I long to keep you, for I love you so.

Sober little school girl, with your strap of books,
And such grave importance in your puzzled looks;
Solving weary problems, poring over sums,
Yet with tooth for sponge cake and for sugar plums:
Reading books of romance in your bed at night,
Waking up to study with the morning light;
Anxious as to ribbons, deft to tie a bow,
Full of contradictions — I would keep you so.

Sweet and thoughtful maiden, sitting by my side,
All the world's before you, and the world is wide;
Hearts are there for winning, hearts are there to break,
Has your own, shy maiden, just begun to wake?
Is that rose of dawning glowing on your cheek
Telling us in blushes what you will not speak?
Shy and tender maiden, I would fain forego
All the golden future, just to keep you so.

Ah! the listening angels saw that she was fair,
Ripe for rare unfolding in the upper air;
Now the rose of dawning turns to lily white,
And the close-shut eyelids veil the eyes from sight;
All the past I summon as I kiss her brow —
Babe and child and maiden, all are with me now.
Oh! my heart is breaking; but God's love I know —
Safe among the angels, He will keep her so,

Independent.

A Lesson to Learners.

When old Zachariah Fox, the great merchant of Liverpool, was asked by what means he contrived to realize so large a fortune as he possessed, his reply was,

"Friend, by one article alone, and in which thou mayest deal too, if thou pleasest; it is *civility*."

If a Christian's faith be strong and ardent, a vitality will be imparted to all he does.

Our Sunday Schools.

MASSACHUSETTS.

— The Sunday School of our church in Newtonville has been admitted to membership of the Newton Sunday School Union composed of the Baptist, Congregational and Methodist churches of that city. At the annual meeting of the school, the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: Superintendent, E. T. Trofither, Jr.; Vice Superintendent, A. T. Sylvester; Secretary, Louis E. G. Green; Treasurer, Annie E. Elliot; Librarian, M. B. Allen; Ass't. Librarian. L. E. G. Green; Library Committee, H. F. Allen and Mrs. Chamberlain. The Superintendent's report showed the school in a healthy and growing condition, with the debt incurred by them in finishing and furnishing the vestry, entirely cleared off, with a surplus in the treasury. A letter was read from the Secretary of the Newton Sunday School Union, notifying them that their application for admission to the Union had been accepted,

— The South Boston society will dispense with the services of its quartette choir after the first of April. Prof, Dudley has in training a chorus choir of the voices in the Sunday School, to take the place of the quartette.

— The Sunday School at Webster is reported as coming into an improved working condition.

MAINE.

— The Sunday School connected with the society at West New Portland recently gave an exhibition in their church, which was well attended and highly creditable to the members of the school. This school has had regular sessi ns during the past year, under the superintendence of Bro. Elbridge True, who is unwearied in his exertions in its behalf.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

— The Sunday School at South New Market, sends good report. They have recently made important additions to their Sunday School Library.

VERMONT.

— The society in North Montpelier has begun its second year, under the pastorship of Rev. S. S. Davis, under the most favorable auspices. Church attendance is increasing, and Sunday School doing finely.

— Rev. F. A. Healy of Derby Line, in a letter to the *Star*, writes thus: "I organized a Sunday School a few weeks ago at his place. Bro A. T. Foster is our Superintendent and in interest and efficiency he is a model. Indeed, the Superintendent, assistant and teachers, form a body of workers that gives full warrant of success. In this new movement we are prospering even beyond what was hoped for, and have every reason to thank God and go forward."

NEW YORK.

— In the Church of Our Father, Brooklyn, the Sunday School prospers. It is reported as having an average attendance of about one hundred and ninety pupils.

— We copy with pleasure the following report from the Church of the Redeemer, at Albany, "It is not generally known, that during the many recent months when this parish was without a pastor, Mr. Wilson, at the head of a small band of teachers, and under very adverse and trying circumstances, kept the Sunday School together, and was mainly instrumental in preventing its dissolution. The influence he wielded and the encouragement given by his untiring attention to the duties of his post, kept both teachers and scholars together." We also learn that at the Christmas Festival of this school a part of the programme was an excellent rendering of the Christmas piece taken from the Christmas number of the MYRTLE, page 277, which they say was elaborated with a completeness in detail that would have charmed the heart of the editor.

— From Geneva they write, "Our school is in a prosperous condition under the direction of our educated and excellent superintendent, C. N. Hemiup."

— Syracuse says, "Within the year our Sunday School (which we consider now one of the first and best organized in Central New York) has nearly doubled in its average attendance."

—From Frankfort the word is, "our congregation is increasing. So also is the Sunday School and Bible Class."

—From Cicero, "A good Sunday School is sustained with most encouraging prospects."

— The parish in Middleville is in a fine condition. The Sunday School is large, having a band of devoted teachers to attend to its interests. Rev. S. R. Ward is the pastor.

PENNSYLVANIA.

— From Titusville we learn that they continue their Sunday School and Bible Class, though they have been obliged to discontinue the preaching service for the present. They hold also their weekly Teacher's Meeting, and a prayer meeting, and from these living embers hope to keep the fire alive until such time as they can again settle a shepherd over the flock.

OHIO.

—S. B. E. writes from Mt. Gilead, "Our Sunday School continues to improve under the successful management of the Superintendent, Bro. Smith Thomas.

IOWA.

—Our school at Monticello is flourishing under the care of Rev. W. P. Payne and wife.

ILLINOIS.

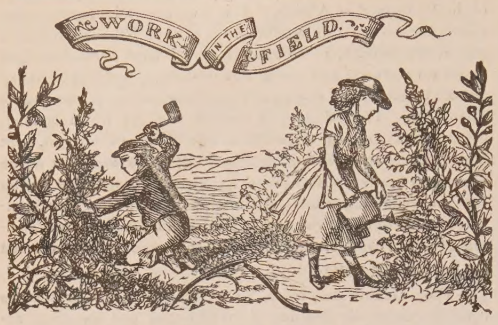
— A concert was given by the Sunday School children of St. Paul's church, Sunday evening, Jan. 3d, and was highly enjoyed and appreciated by quite a large audience. The singing and declamations were made from choice selections, and were well rendered, some in a most commendable manner, and the little five-year-old boy's "Good-night," was as sweet as his little face. Four little misses took around the contribution baskets, and thus our treasury resources were augmented, and our means for supplying our library with the so much needed books, facilitated.

— At Dixon the school has increased one-third in numbers during the past year, and under its new and efficient Superintendent, Mr. C. Woolley, it promises a greater degree of prosperity than ever before.

MICHIGAN.

—The second annual anniversary of the Sunday School connected with the Universalist church at Bay City, occurred recently. The entertainment throughout was satisfactory, and those present regretted that such occasions occur only once a year. So says the Bay City *Tribune*.

A MAN has not risen very high who expends his energy only in scorning and contempt for the evil.



Doing for our Neighbor.

GALATIONS vi. 2.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

When we talked with you last week about being kind and helpful to those who are living under the same roof with you, we but began what we have to say to you about doing for others.

There are houses on the right and on the left of you, and they are occupied by people who are hungry and thirsty and cold, who have hearts that need tenderness, and minds that need knowedge, and souls that need growth and purity as yours do.

Our question is, what shall we do for these neighbors, to make them happier and better.

We have no rigbt to live near them and be indifierent to their wants or careless about our power of supplying them.

We can do something every day, if we will, to add to the happiness of those around us.

Andrew came in from church the other day and said to his brother,

"Oh Jimmy, I wish you had been at church this afternoon. Our minister did preach such a good sermon."

"What was it about?" says Jimmy. "I don't like sermons much, for they are made for grown folks, and little boys like me cannot understand them."

"This one was easy to understand," said Andrew. "That's the reason that I liked it, and that was the reason that I told you it was such a good sermon, I conld understand every word of it."

"Well, what was it about? I wish I had gone to church with you. I should like to hear one sermon that I could understand."

"The sermon was about bearing one another's burdeus," said Andrew

"I don't care about that," says Jimmy. "I am too small yet to know how to help anybody."

"Oh, no you are not. That was one of the things that the minister said. That every little child could obey this law as well as the mightiest man in the land."

"Well, I would like to know what little boys like you and I can do for others. We are hardly big enough to take care of ourselves. Mother said this morning, when she was helping me to dress, that I should be large enough by another summer to dress myself. Now what do you think a boy not old enough to dress himself alone can do for other people?

"Why Jimmy, the minister talked about just such boys. He said we could do a great many little things. I know he told the truth for I have thought so a great many times. He said little people, like large people, are looklng out for great opportunities to do good, when they ought to be taking hold of all the little opportunities that come in their way."

"Yes, but little people are not big enough to do these deeds of kindness when they see the opportunities."

"Why yes they are. Little people can do little deeds. Great deeds are not expected of them. I thought of it, as I was coming home, and I found two opportunities to do little good deeds on my way home from church."

"Well, you are two years older than I am."

"Yes, but these were little things that you could have done as well as I."

"What were they?"

"One was getting the hat of an old gentleman for him, which the wind took off his head and landed in the field. He was old and could not easily get over the fence, and he seemed very grateful to me for getting the hat."

"What did he give you?"

"Oh, for shame, Jimmy, to think of that. He did not give me anything. The minister said we must do good hoping for nothing again. That is the kind of doing which God loves to see. The other act of kindness was to take a very little girl home to her mother who had wandered from home and could not find her way back again. I feel very happy to have done these two little services, and I am going to try all that I can every day to find opportunities for helping others."

"I wonder if the rest of the people, who heard tne sermon, have tried to do good since they came away from the church," said Jimmy.

Are not you and I, dear children, who read this lesson, filled with the same wondering? If all the people would but try to do good — little acts of kindness for each other, how happy this world would become.

Enigma No. 5.

I am composed of twenty-three letters.
My 4, 15, 1, 13, is a girl's name.
My 7, 4, 11, 17, 21, 18, 8, 22. is a large animal.
My 22, 9, 18, 4, is a small animal.
My 2, 20, 18, 16, 12, is a boy's name.
My 18, 4, 3, 1, 20, is a girl's name.
My 2, 14, 6, 23, 20, is a useful animal.
My 10, 11, 19, 19, 13, is what grows on vines.
My whole is what all children should do.

Answer to Enigma No. 4.

JAN. 30. Saint Nicholas.

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